

THE MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT

In This Issue

An Interview With
Dr. J. Drew Lanham

Q&A With MOS's
New President

#BirdNamesForBirds

In Memoriam
Les Roslund
&
Paul Zucker



An Interview With Dr. J. Drew Lanham

On May 25, New York Audubon board member Christian Cooper was birding a protected area in Central Park, when he asked a white woman to comply with the law and leash her dog. The woman called the police and claimed that an African American man (Cooper) was threatening her, while Cooper recorded her with his phone camera. His sister posted the video online, it has since attracted millions of viewers across the globe. Since the incident, Dr. J. Drew Lanham's (above) comments have been sought many times by various media. He was kind enough to give a phone interview to Barbara Johnson.

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Editor's Note

The question, *How can MOS become a more "diverse" organization?* Is not new.

As a member of MOS, an MOS board member, editor of *The Yellowthroat*, past VP of the Frederick Bird Club, and the only Latinx birder I know that is part of this organization (*estás ahí? llámame!*), here are my thoughts: MOS has been taking steps toward making improvements in the organization with regards to being more inclusive by way of "diversity", but these improvements cannot happen overnight. The steps that I am privy to are: a statement against racism, an effort to invite a diversity of speakers to give programs at various clubs, a forthcoming EDI statement, and a sustained financial commitment to the Annual Scholarship for Black and Latinx Birders of Maryland & DC. I urge MOS to continue on this path and to take more steps toward a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse bird conservation organization and to prioritize all efforts to do so. This includes supporting efforts such as the Black and Latinx Birders Scholarship and supporting organizations that are budding in the region, such as the Feminist Bird Club (FBC).

The FBC is an organization that is rooted in providing a safe birding experience for birders while protecting the rights of Black people, Indigenous peoples, people of color, LGBTQIA+ folx, people with disabilities, and women. "Diversity" is not new to this organization and by supporting the formation of an FBC in the region, MOS has an opportunity to gain the knowledge and experience needed to "become a more diverse organization" itself or to be partners with an organization that prides itself on protecting the rights of marginalized groups of people.

Recent racist events in the birding community, for many of us who are part of these marginalized groups, are not actually recent events. When I leave my home there's a contract of trust that I enter into with the world around me. The strength of that trust varies depending on how the people in my immediate vicinity (no matter where I might be) perceive me. That could be true for any birder leaving their home; for Latinx birders, Black birders, birders of color, disabled birders, and LGBTQIA+ birders, it's different. What these recent racist events have done is brought out a more intensely unified allyship among those who truly want equity and inclusion in their birding community—MOS should continue to be a part of that.

Orietta C. Estrada, Editor, *The Maryland Yellowthroat*



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President's Corner**Reflections on the Last Two Years**

In this, my final President's Corner before handing over the gavel to our new president, John McKitterick, I will reflect on MOS events over the last two years. In my first President's Corner, in the 2018 September-October edition of the Maryland Yellowthroat, I outlined several major MOS projects that were planned or already underway. In addition there were some 'black swan' events, both good and bad, very bad.

First, a major new project has been the third breeding Bird Atlas for Maryland and DC. In 2018, fully 16 years had passed since the start of the second such atlas, we therefore felt that it was time for another atlas to reassess the current status of our breeding birds. The Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 3 (BBA3) began in January of this year, under the able leadership of Gabriel Foley and with guidance from a steering committee composed of many of the leading lights from BBA2. Greatly facilitated by an eBird app, customized for our area by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and powered by the enthusiasm of our many atlasers, the pace of adding breeding records has been outstanding!

In my 2018 edition of this column I noted that it was unlikely that MOS would be able to afford to purchase property to create new sanctuaries. So it was very welcome surprise when we learned that Beverly DuBose III, a member of the Quindocqua partnership, which owned extensive marshlands in Somerset County, wanted to donate 669 acres of marsh, which was adjacent to our Irish Grove sanctuary, to MOS. This is a wonderful addition to our Irish Grove sanctuary and we greatly appreciate Mr. DuBose's generosity.

A project which was under consideration in 2018 was the hiring of CCC (Conservation Community Consulting) to manage our 2019 convention as a way to upgrade the event and attract more attendees. This annual event was in need of fresh ideas and energy. Jim Rapp and Dave Wilson (the principals of CCC) proceeded to energetically promoted the event, kept the membership informed with a website and regular updates, and administered the field trips. These trips were enjoyed by all who took part in them. We plan to use CCC's services again for the 2021 convention.

Another project was the third MOS retreat. Previous retreats were held in 2002 and 2017. By early 2018 we felt that the magnitude and pace of changes (environmental, digital communications and sociological) confronting MOS necessitated another retreat. After several postponements, our third retreat was held on November 2, 2019 at the Cylburn Arboretum. Colin Rees moderated and the other 22 attendees formed break out groups for subject-focused discussions. Recommendations emerging from this event are to be found in Colin's November 6, 2019 report.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a truly malign 'black swan' event. This abruptly stopped all in person Society events between non-family members, including the 2020 convention. I will not dwell on the pandemic further, but do wish to applaud the alacrity with which MOS members have embraced virtual meetings, whether by Google Meet or Zoom, to keep in contact with each other. Such meetings, as well as email and social media, have allowed some form of socializing to continue among MOS members. Such communications are vital to the health of any organization.

The recent horrific killing of several Black people by police in our country prompted the MOS board to issue a declaration condemning racism. This declaration is now on the opening page of our website. Some argue that MOS should avoid making such statements and stick to birds and birding. But there are times when remaining silent implies acceptance of the status quo. Now is not the time for silence.

This may be the first instance of MOS making a moral statement unrelated to birds or conservation, but it need not be the last. I believe that we should consider placing a statement on our website affirming our acceptance of people from the LGBTQIA+ community. This would reassure this group that MOS is a safe organization to join. The onus would then be on the Chapters to welcome any such new members. One of my hopes as president has been to see our membership expand and diversify. Making MOS a welcoming organization for LGBTQIA+ folk could go some way towards realizing this hope.

I will close by telling you how much I have enjoyed being president. The exposure to the many Society projects and problems has been both stimulating and gratifying. I thank you all for your support.

Good birding, stay safe and best regards,

Robin G. Todd PhD , Past President MOS

Q & A with Incoming MOS President John McKitterick

We welcome incoming MOS President, John McKitterick, as he takes over the position on September 1, 2020 for a two-year term. I interviewed John for The Maryland Yellowthroat in order to introduce him to the membership. I have taken the liberty of editing and abbreviating John's free-ranging answers, while attempting to preserve their sense. – Robin Todd.

RT: When and why did you join MOS?

John McKitterick: I joined the Howard County Bird Club in the late 1980's, not realizing it was part of MOS or that there was an MOS, having seen an ad for the HCBC in the Columbia Flyer.

RT: Where are you from and where did you grow up?

JM: I was born in London, as my father then worked there for the World Bank, but we returned to the US when I was only 2 months old. I grew up in Olde Town Alexandria.

RT: How did you become interested in birds and was there anyone who started your interest?

JM: My mother was always interested in birds and it was she who prompted my interest in them. We used to take 4-week family vacations on a 200 acre farm which lay in the middle of a state forest in New Hampshire which was a wonderful place for birds. We used to sit out on the cabin porch in the evenings and listen to the beautiful songs of veerys and Swainson's and wood thrushes. And in the afternoons there were hermit thrushes singing. I did not otherwise bird during grade school or college but, when I was doing graduate work in *the University of Champagne*, I used to drive over to a state park on *the Sangemare river* where there was old growth bottomland forest. This was a wonderful area for warblers and other birds.

RT: What are your favorite birding sites in Maryland?

JM: I do not have any particular favorites but still have not visited all the good birding spots in the state.

RT: What are your favorite birds?

JM: Those would be the thrushes and the spring warblers.

RT: What concerns you most about Maryland's bird?

JM: My two top concerns are climate change and habitat loss. The former drives so many other negative factors impacting birds. It is already apparent, witness the great generally high humidity levels in summer; September no longer is like the start of Fall, that now belongs to October.

RT: What concerns you most about MOS?

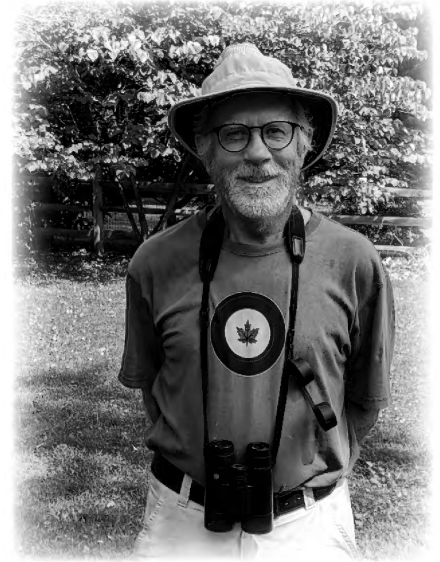
My main concern is that we do a lot of things simply because they have always been done. This may explain why it is sometimes difficult to recruit volunteers for MOS projects.

RT: What do you plan to achieve during your presidency at MOS?

JM: Following on from my concerns about MOS, we need to reinvent some of the things which we now do unthinkingly. MOS needs to enter the 21st Century, in its use of technology, especially in social media. We have more followers on the MOS Facebook page than we have regular members. I plan to increase the benefits of membership as a means to get new people to join.

RT: What do you like most about MOS?

JM: The people!





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for

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BIRDERS OF MARYLAND & DC 

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THE MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT



Cedar Waxwing. Harford Co. Image Credit: Deb Stewart



Blackpoll Warbler. Soldier's Delight. Image Credit: Gene Ricks



Momma Downy Woodpecker feeding son. Female hatch year don't have the red crown. Image Credit: George Jett.



Brown Thrasher. Harford Co. Image Credit: Deb Stewart



7 Hatch year Common grackle food begging from parent Grackle for peanut. Image Credit: George Jett.



Bird Names for Birds: Freeing Birds from the Shadow of Colonialism is Overdue

Jordan Rutter and Gabriel Foley

Content warning: There is content in this piece, due to the inclusion of direct quotes and the topic, that contains racist and offensive language.

The shotgun blast echoed through the overgrown clearing, and Rev. John Bachman stooped to pick up his newest specimen. It was a small, reddish-brown bird; a sparrow of some kind, but not one he knew. He placed it delicately in his bag and walked home to prepare the bird's skin for his collection. Years later, a naturalist named John James Audubon would stay at Bachman's home and collect the same species. Audubon would go on to name the bird "Bachman's Sparrow" in honor of his friend, the first White naturalist to have collected the species.

A carefully applied common name can convey information about the organism's habitat, range, behavior, or appearance, or it can point towards the naming history. The naming history—as interesting as it may be—should be a footnote adjacent to the marvels of a bird's natural history. Instead, an honorifically named bird is viewed through the lens of that name, and its intrinsic value is overshadowed by the ownership ascribed to its collector. Take Bachman's Sparrow, for instance: the sparrow is now Bachman's, and its evolutionary history has been reduced to a blast from Bachman's shotgun.

There are 150 North American birds that have been bestowed with eponyms (names that are named after someone else) that honor figures like Bachman or Audubon—figures that often carry reprehensible histories with them. For example, Bachman was a vocal proponent of slavery and racial inequality, while Audubon readily plagiarized, lied, and even contributed human skulls to the personal collection of a well-known phrenologist, a discredited pseudoscience that postulated that cranial measurements would show racial differences in intelligence. Perhaps having the names of these men as eponyms serves as a remembrance of past atrocities we must never repeat, but this cryptic lesson is far removed from its context, hidden behind a nomenclatural honorific.

Audubon, Bachman, and many others were active during the height of scientific collection efforts in North America, and their indefatigable efforts contributed heavily to our knowledge of biological systems. But the greed of colonialism that supported their efforts came with a hefty price and few benefits for a territory's original inhabitants and their descendants today. These harmful actions required justification, so Europeans and Americans used pseudoscience drowning in biases to show that they were, conveniently, superior to everyone else. These theories created the racism that has affected the structure of our society, our interactions with each other, and even how long or how well we will live.

Eponymous names do a disservice to birds by placing the focus on the collection history, rather than on the bird itself. In many cases, they honor men whose actions and beliefs were beyond questionable; they were repugnant. And, as if this weren't enough, each and every eponym casts the shroud of colonialism over the wings of its namesake.

Every identified organism receives a binomial Latin name that is essentially immutable, according to international conventions. This rigidity creates stability and organization that improve scientific research. But the purpose of a common name, like Bachman's Sparrow, is simply to provide a more accessible and articulable moniker. A single common name that is used by an entire community is even more useful, and the sizable birding community has created a demand for the standardization of English common bird names.

Ornithologists traditionally determine what common names should be used, but the rules they follow—perhaps better called “guiding philosophies” than “rules”—are less stringent than those for binomial nomenclature and the names selected more discretionary.

Replacing eponymous common names with descriptive names requires little more than a decision and the willpower to carry it out. Ignoring it only perpetuates colonialism, racism, and barriers to equal participation; it callously emphasizes exclusion rather than unity. Changing these names may be just one small step on the long road to true inclusivity, but that alone makes it worth doing.

To learn more, visit www.birdnamesforbirds.wordpress.com or on Twitter and Instagram at [@birdnames4birds](https://twitter.com/birdnames4birds).

<https://birdnamesforbirds.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/bn4b-logo-1.png>

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Henslow's Sparrow. Western Maryland. Image Credit: Gene Ricks.

CHAPTER CHATTER

Edited by
Jean
Wheeler



CECIL COUNTY

Of course no one had been getting out and about over the course of the the last three months. That is with the exception of working on the Maryland -DC Breeding Bird Atlas III Project. Those of us in Cecil County were also involved. At this point in time 92 percent of the county's 53 blocks have recorded data entered for them with 132 coded species. Of those 132 species fifty-six percent or 75 species have so far been confirmed. Nice work. Sitting on top of the list with 59 confirmed birds is of all people, *Chris Starling*. County project coordinator *Sean McCandless* has logged 33 confirmed species, not to shabby either. A job well done. *Ken Drier* was able to talk his way onto Mount Harmon Plantation in Earleville and Bell Manor over looking the Susquehanna River just above the Conowingo Dam both of which are currently closed to the public for purposes of working on the atlas project. Very strange being the only person on the properties at the time. Cecil is off to a strong start on this project.

Nest box monitoring continues at the Woodlawn Reserve with 87 percent of the boxes having already confirmed House Wrens, Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds nesting in them according to Ken Drier. *Ken Drier*

HARFORD COUNTY

"A birder's patch is an extension of themselves. It says something about who they want to be, what they want to see regularly, how seriously they take this birding hobby. For a birder, finding a patch is akin to finding a part of their soul...It is the most important thing you can possibly do while carrying binoculars." —Nate Swick

The Ma Pa trail at Blakes Venture is part of a community trail of walkers, runners, a few bicyclers and this one silver haired woman with binoculars around her neck and a camera with long lens strapped across her body. Looking and listening, she moves slowly until she spots movement or color or sound and then works to get a lens on it. That's me, a birdwatcher on a mission to code breeding birds in Bel Air CW, Harford County.

The trail is a riparian buffer zone along with an open wetland and woods located in the block I am surveying for the Breeding Bird Atlas 3. The BBA3 has made me look at habitat, behavior, bird features in a new way and on my own—it's refreshing to learn something new through frequent observation and personal research. For example, I discovered a pair of Brown Thrashers in a grove of trees. I went home to learn that they nest low in the edges of this habitat. I returned to watch them enter a bush repeatedly. I returned again and observed them picking up worms and entering the same bush. It is so rewarding to code the thrashers as probable breeders(pair in suitable habitat) to confirmed breeders(carrying food).

Getting to know this trail has been a joy in this time of restrictions for more than birdwatching. I have been greeted by some very nice people. One older woman returned one day with her binoculars hoping to see the bluebirds near their nest box. Another lady recalled the impact of beavers on the open area 30 years ago that is now grasses and wetland—good to know. People ask what I am seeing. I share that I am volunteering in a breeding bird study. They share, too. "Theres a big woodpecker down the trail." "I have robins nesting under my deck." "I feed the birds all the time." I am not alone in my need to connect.

The camera I mentioned belongs to my husband, Don who helps me with this project on weekends. We enjoy working together comparing photos with illustrations. Don is becoming a better birder, and hopefully, I will become a better photographer as he sends me off with instructions and the camera.

The BBA3 has led to unexpected opportunities. I have discovered the rewards and joy of birding a new patch and birding with renewed purpose. *Deb Stewart*

Atlasing in the Time of COVID-19

As the country suddenly shut down due to Coronavirus I was freaking out to put it mildly. How long would the shut down last? When would I see my friends again? Would I catch it? I was convinced I would and that I would die! My emotions were out of control. Did I say I was freaking out?!

As I settled into my aloneness, I developed a daily routine: up 5:30 AM, exercise/yoga, breakfast, pray, practice the piano, phone calls. I was checking on friends and they were checking on me. I was still doing Cornell's Project Feeder Watch, so observing and feeding my birds was a big part of the day. Gradually the new routine helped me control my fear and settle into this new normal. I so missed seeing friends and hugging. As of this writing I haven't hugged or been hugged since March 8th.

I had volunteered to participate in the Breeding Bird Atlas. I did it 20 years ago and was looking forward to the training scheduled for March 22. I have never done ebird before. The training like most everything became virtual with a Google-Meet. That was actually fun.

I looked at a couple of block maps that *Matt Hafner* and *Dennis Kirkwood* sent and decided on Bel Air CE. It included my neighborhood, and Prospect Mill ES. There was a lot of green on that map and my neighbors had been walking their dogs there for years. I went with them and their 2 dogs to scope out the place. I had no idea of the Walls-Cook Trail owned by Harford Community College. My first impression was of a mixed hardwood forest with a decent understory and somewhat hilly. A small stream meandered through the forest. I began thinking woodpeckers, ovenbirds, nuthatches, warblers. Before entering this large forest tract, there are several grassy playing fields. Each field is bordered by substantially forested, shrubby 30-50 feet wide tracts. Indigo Bunting, flycatchers came to mind. I needed to go bird!

I admit, I interpreted the "shut down" order. Hiking was permitted, so I hiked with my binoculars. On April 3, I drove to Prospect Mill ES. I placed my MD/DC Atlas sign on the dash and walked into the woods. It was a deeply spiritual experience. Entering through a narrow opening, I walked down a steep, narrow, dark path, across a wooden bridge into a large clearing. I glanced about and was overwhelmed. It felt like hallowed ground, as if I was in a cathedral. Towering oak, beech, maple, and tulip poplars formed a dome over the forest floor. Dappled light peaked through. Silence enveloped me. No traffic noises, it took my breath away and tears flowed, the sheer beauty of the place! As I stood transfixed, I heard it, the choir of birds -robins, cardinals, titmouse, chickadee, red-bellied woodpecker, Carolina wrens. My soul filled with hope and I knew birding, atlasing and this place would be my salvation.

Since that day, I have gone birding 3-4 times a week for 2-4 hours at a time. Birding and atlasing has become somewhat of an obsession. Because of the shutdown I never met any other people. As the spring progressed the bird choir filled out as Ovenbirds with their emphatic "teacher, teacher, teacher" and the ethereal Wood Thrush joined. One morning I had 4 species of woodpeckers drumming. What a glorious racket!

This area included *Mary Murray's* Bluebird Trail that she started as a teacher at Prospect Mill. She blessed me with 3 Bluebird boxes. Only one has had Bluebirds, which were so much fun to watch. I had no idea there was so much rich habitat so close to my home.

Then I discovered another area, Shucks Road Regional Park. It's not the beautiful, wild forest, but the playing fields back up to woods, farm fields, and wet, marshy, scrub habitat that is alive with birds. I never expected to confirm Field Sparrow, but I did when I noted parents feeding downy fledglings!

Bel Air CE can't compete with Susquehanna State Park, but there is so much to explore here and I have 5 years to do it. Hopefully, next year I can have a friend or two with me to share the beauty and joy of this area. *Jean Wheeler*

Finding a New Patch

In November, my husband and I moved from our single-family home of 33 years to a condo. We had worked very hard on our former yard to make it a bird-friendly habitat, and indeed, we were host to a variety of birds year 'round. Nothing spectacular or rare, but all the "usual suspects" of Northern Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Carolina Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos in the winter, Grey Catbirds in the summer. We loved them all; it was tough to give up.

So, one of the prerequisites of moving was finding a place that had "green". In a county where there is so much development, it wasn't easy. We finally discovered a condo complex that is surrounded by 34 acres of protected natural area. A deciduous forest, a flowing creek, an open field, and several areas of wetland complete the package. And, (oh happy day!), it is birder heaven.

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Eastern Bluebird taken along Gynn Acres Path in Columbia. Image Credit: Dean Mahlstedt.



Dark-eyed Junco taken at Fort McHenry. Image Credit: Dean Mahlstedt.



Prairie Warbler. Soldier's Delight. Image Credit: Gene Ricks.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Soldier's Delight. Image Credit: Gene Ricks.



Dickcissel. Sixes Bridges Road. Image Credit: Gene Ricks.



Red-eyed Vireo. Image Credit: Don Stewart



Seaside Sparrow. Deal Island. Image Credit: Gene Ricks.

THE MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT



Sanderling and Red Knot. Assateague Island National Seashore. Image Credit: Gene Ricks.



A group of paddlers with the Canoe Cruisers Association were enjoying an early morning trip down the George Washington Canal.

We noticed a struggling hummingbird in the river. Adam Issenberg used his paddle to gently scoop it onto his sprayskirt. It sat peacefully, recovering, as we all admired it. It was then paddled over to the shore and placed on a rock. It flew off to our claps and cheers. Image Credit: Barbara Brown





White Winged Dove. Howard County. Image Credit: H. David Fleischmann.



White-throated Sparrow taken at Mariner Point Park in Joppatowne. Image Credit: Dean Mahlstedt.

Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership Conservation-From-Home Update

No doubt most of you are feeling the effects of canceled activities and events over the past few months. MBCP is right there with you. Bald Eagle nest monitoring concluded for this season, with participants monitoring nests to their level of comfort and safety. Since 2017, MBCP and Audubon MD-DC have partnered on monitoring Important Bird Areas in Maryland. National Audubon closed all Center and canceled all outdoor activities until further notice, which includes IBA monitoring. The MBCP monitoring project as part of the Cecil County Green Infrastructure Plan, scheduled to conclude at the end of May, has been pushed back to June 2021 by Cecil County to hopefully allow for appropriate monitoring coverage next spring. And for the first time since the Breeding Bird Survey began in 1965, the USGS canceled all survey routes this summer.

The 2020 Frontiers in Ornithology symposium, scheduled for September, has been canceled. And we have already made the decision to cancel the Maryland Bird Conservation Symposium in January 2021. The MBCP Board of Directors held its June meeting via Zoom. We anticipate all Board and Science Advisory Council meetings to be held via Zoom through at least the end of this year. We added “Zoom” as a verb in the English language this year, and the phrase “Zoomed out” is in high fashion! But I like the advantages Zoom and Google Meet bring to meetings I schedule and those I attend, including larger meeting participation (including out-of-state participants) than previous in-person meetings.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) events were also retooled into virtual events. Bird City Maryland communities La Plata and Annapolis adjusted planning spring activities to an online format. We are working with WMBD organizer Environment for the Americas on some virtual events for this October that will have specific applicability to La Plata, Annapolis, and other communities in the process of preparing their Bird City applications.

On a positive note, the Farmland Raptor Program and Chimney Swift Conservation Program are both taking off! Calvert County Natural Resources just installed a swift tower. Anne Arundel Bird Club will be installing a tower at Kinder Farm Park and is raising money for another tower at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. A Farmland Raptor coordinating committee is being formed with people running Barn Owl and American Kestrel nest box programs from Frederick County to the Eastern Shore. I am available to “Zoom” (do a Zoom meeting) about these programs for your chapter. We want MOS chapters to take the lead in their county for these nesting structures.

Like you, MBCP is looking forward to being able to resume “normal” outdoor and in-person activities. Until then we will continue to advance conservation priorities, with the help of MOS and its chapters and members, from the comfort (?) of our home offices.

Chris Eberly director@marylandbirds.org

Hog Island Scholarship

Calling all teachers and naturalists involved with environmental education and conservation. The Maryland Ornithological Society annually awards scholarships to the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Bremen, Maine for people involved in these fields. Each award covers the cost of tuition, room, and board for an intensive five or six-day course of study and instruction in ornithology, ecology, conservation, and natural history. Travel arrangements and costs are the responsibility of the recipient.

The Hog Island Audubon Camps are known for their high level of instruction by top-notch educators such as Pete Dunne, Scott Weidensaul and Steve Kress in past years.

Tentative dates for the workshops offered for 2021 scholarships will be:

Building Better Birding Skills: June 6-11

Field Ornithology: June 20-25

Sharing Nature: an Educator's Week: July 11-16

For details regarding the application process, please check the MOS web site: <https://mdbirds.org/education/>

Anna Urciolo, Scholarship Chair

The YMOS Big Day

Like so many groups, YMOS had to significantly modify its activities this spring. Canceling all scheduled trips, the group still ran trips with students birding separately. Beginning with the March Birdathon where each member birded separately, the members then had a Big Sit and an Atlasing weekend. Normally the World Series of Birding (WSB) in New Jersey would be the culminating event for the group in early May with YMOS teams participating as they have since 2000. New Jersey Audubon decided to run their event with teams staying in their respective states, but under those conditions, YMOS decided to run its own event.

What started as a small YMOS event grew in scope with the result that many more participated in the YMOS Big Day than previously in the WSB. While originally 16 YMOS members on 4 teams had planned to participate in the WSB, the YMOS Big Day had 45 participants on 11 teams with students participating from England, Washington State, Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina. Almost twice as many students participated in the YMOS Big Day as in the 2020 WSB event. Each team set its own goal based on the geographic area they chose to cover, from a single Maryland county to, in one case, 3 states with a team member in each state. All coordinated routes in advance and developed a team target list for the Big Day. While safety was the driver of the event, the YMOS format promoted flexibility in participation and allowed remote students to participate.

When the dust settled late in the evening on May 8th, the teams had found a collective 309 species with 255 found in the MD/DE/Northern VA area. 36 warbler species were found as well as 7 species of owl. Team scores ranged from 67 species for the youngest team (ages 6 – 10) to 199 species with 4 teams recording 185 or more species. Among the many unusual species found were Barn Owl, Wilson's Phalarope, Orange-crowned Warbler, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and Black Tern.

Like previous WSB competitions, the focus of the YMOS Big Day was for each team to scout, set a goal, and then to work together to reach that goal. With the success of this year's Big Day and the potential for including a greater number of students, the YMOS Big Day may become a regular event, allowing for teams to either compete together or apart if either geography or the virus prohibits in-person birding.

Trips are scheduled to reduce in a slightly modified format in August if the situation permits.

"The Big Day was a great idea. I had never done a competition like this before. Our team couldn't bird together, but we used Zoom to plan our day and come up with our target list. We kept in contact during the day as we neared our target total, and it was exciting when we ended up beating it. What a great day for all of us." - YMOS Birder.

George Radcliffe, YMOS

Bluebirds of Antietam, a Documentary Film

Bluebirds of Antietam a documentary film



When my husband and I retired some years ago, we became volunteers at Antietam National Battlefield. While at the battlefield my husband had seen Mark and Jean Raabe maintaining bluebird boxes located on the fences. We had not witnessed this at any other national park in our travels throughout the U.S. Not long after this discovery, we started attending the newly established Maryland International Film Festival in Hagerstown, Maryland. Drawn to documentaries, I started to think that this set of boxes at Antietam National Battlefield would make a good subject.

While attending the festival in 2019, my husband saw a documentary produced and directed by a local filmmaker, Conrad Weaver of Conjo Studios in Emmitsburg, MD. I then decided it was time to get my idea down on film. Not knowing any people who were actually responsible for this trail, I contacted the Maryland Bluebird Society. Its President, Kathy Kremnitzer, made my job as producer of this film easy by supplying everyone's contact information. After contacting all of the individuals involved in monitoring the trail and the filmmaker, we met to discuss the idea of a short documentary. I was thrilled to find that everyone involved was available and willing to do the project.

We began filming at the Battlefield in May 2019 by interviewing Kathy, Judy and John Lilga, and Jennifer Hendershot, the current trail monitors. Last, but certainly not least,

An Interview With Dr. J. Drew Lanham

...continued from cover.



Images courtesy of Dr. Lanham.

BJ: *How is it for you, as someone who has spoken so long and publicly about the experience of Black birders, that one of the tipping points in this seismic societal shift involved a Black man who was falsely accused while birding?*

JDL: You know, it was a surprise, but not a shock. I was probably most surprised that it happened in one of the most diverse cities in the world where a lot of people pride themselves on inclusion and on engaging with all sorts of people of different backgrounds and hues. But there's almost an expectation of waiting for the other shoe to drop if you're Black in America, if you're doing anything—whether it's watching birds or walking your dog. Getting called out, or at least being watched, is *de rigueur* for us.

A student asked if I had foreseen that, as if I were somehow prescient. My response was, “Well, I’ve lived that.” And so have most of the Black birders I know. The novelty was that it happened in Central Park, and social media and the immediacy of a camera phone made it real to a lot of people. It wasn’t just a satire, it was real life, and it could have ended in a tragedy. It was a sad sort of validation. And while all that may not happen every day to birders of color, the *thoughts* of it happening—and the tension where it *could* happen—that exists, and it somewhat changes your focus, as someone who is out there trying to notice other things. So it contributes to this— not *post*-traumatic—but really more of a persistent trauma, of having to be not totally engrossed in what you’re doing. Unless you’re in such a far-off-the-beaten-path place that you don’t have to worry about human beings.

I think it was an opportunity for people to see the weaponization of words and perceptions that could have ended in a terrible conflagration. Fortunately it didn’t, but (the fact) that Christian now owns that incident and the feelings behind a story that became a global phenomenon—that should be a lesson to our (birding) community that we’re not isolated and immune from the ills that plague society.

BJ: *MOS has asked itself for years how to welcome and include more people of color, but the questions hovers. Could you share your thoughts?*

JDL: I have spent quite a bit of time on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In the best example of inclusivity I've seen, birds were a conduit for what happened with Carrie Samis and work that she did with young people and her organization, Coastal Stewards.

I always point to a day on Assateague. This was in 2013 when all the Snowy Owls had come South in that irruptive year. Carrie had kids involved in not just what people normally would have young black and brown people do. She didn't have them doing menial things; these kids were banding terns and Brown Pelicans, and learning their *home place*, as it were. I don't think any of them would have called themselves birders, but we're out on Assateague on one of those cold windy blustery days. I call them "sea duck days", when the eiders and scoters and Harlequin Ducks are out in the surf, but our attention was turned to looking for Snowy Owls. Many of those young people, who had come from poverty or near-poverty and struggle had not been to these places, even though they were but a short tern's flight from their homes. All of a sudden, we see one, and then two—I think that day we ended up with five Snowy Owls. Those young people's range maps had been extended beyond the Eastern Shore of Maryland—some from unenviable lives with poverty and hardship—and their lives were suddenly expanded to the Arctic.

I use that as an example of a person who did not have to do what she did, to extend the lives of people beyond what they had known. You have to move out of a comfort zone. We can immerse ourselves in birds, we can raise our binoculars and what we see within that field of view is what we obsess over. But if you take those binoculars down and look around you, you'll see not only the conditions the birds are in, but you'll see the human condition. To understand that human condition and avian condition are the *same* conditions is a point of empathy. One of the things Carrie was able to do was to *not* have race or ethnicity disappear, but to have it appreciated and highlighted, as a source of gathering around these birds and that common effort. Those exercises are few and far between. There was nothing contrived about that—it was something that she had been doing for years. I see very little of that. Very little of—honestly—of white people out there, putting themselves to a point of discomfort, of inconvenience, to do the things that are meaningful to these folks. So I know that she still has relationships with a lot of the people who were out there on the beach that day. The relationships went beyond seeing those Snowy Owls to the rest of people's lives.

And that's the amazing thing that birding can do. It can really join us together to watch, but then give us this enlarged capacity to address the human condition. I am an introvert and I love my alone time, but when I look at what birds have done to bring me together with people of like mind, who I would have never known, that's the magic of birds.

One of the things that I'm constantly trying to do is to connect my home to the places I love. One of the biggest connections between the Eastern Shore of Maryland and my home in South Carolina is a bit south of me. I spend a lot of time down on the Combahee River and ACE Basin salt marsh in the rice impoundments down there. History connects us through Harriet Tubman, who made her farthest excursions south on the Combahee river range. I stand on the shores likely where she called slaves to freedom. We don't get as many Tundra Swans as they get in Maryland but we get a few every winter, and I always think of those Tundra Swans stitching the ACE basin in South Carolina and the Eastern Shore together. In all likelihood, Harriet Tubman, as she stitched those two landscapes together, was watching some of those same birds. She was likely calling them by the names she knew, and envying the freedom of the birds that she saw flying, and wishing the same thing for the people she was liberating.

Continued on page 20...

BJ: *All of us birders on COVID-19 lockdown have experienced what you recently called on NPR the “intensification of the nearby”. While you were at home this Spring, did you observe anything utterly new to you?*

JDL: You’ll hear me call myself interchangeably “birder” and “birdwatcher”. I use “birdwatcher” more and more. Even before quarantine, I would sit on the side of the road watching a loggerhead shrike for hours, and as long as it would allow me to obsess over it, I would. And so, once the call to restrict movement came, I would sit in the backyard in the morning, and as the migratory season progressed, I began to see a few different birds come through. I normally might not have paid much attention to them because I would be out somewhere away from home, and perhaps compiling some larger list. But this was the first year in a while I was able to watch the miracle of migration at home. And the birds I obsessed over at my feeder were Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. I’ve always loved them, but I’ve mostly watched them in other places. This time I got to sit. The females are beautiful in their own right; that gorgeous cafe au lait and the bold bright eyestripe. I was obsessing over watching their behavior—how they at first were shy, and then would begin to come to the feeder, and then begin to *dominate* it, really. A male Cardinal would come to the other end of the feeder and she might tolerate it, but if it got too close or stayed too long, there was a *hiss* that I had never heard before, and the cardinals would leave. Then the males began appearing, and I remembered that John James Audubon called them “bleeding hearts”. I took tons of pictures of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and would wait for that warbling song in the morning. For about 11 days, they were here, and then they were gone. That was probably the most joyful period of the Spring for me, because I threw myself into those birds. I was safely at home, and then Ahmed Arbury happened, and the incident with Brionna Taylor came, and then George Floyd, and so on and so on. By this time the grosbeaks were sort of petering out, and as other things came to fore, it was harder to find joy. I watched a nest of Carolina Wrens fledge. That was amazing, to see the moment when those birds declared their independence, and to watch them become familiar with my backyard, but now they’ve mostly dispersed. That deepening of the “watcher” became important. But that deepening was certainly shallowed, and I sort of ran aground, mentally, with the racial injustices.

So now I’m trying to recover, as much as I can, and now we’re past peak here. It comes and goes so quickly. We’re almost mid-July, and most of these birds have worked first broods and some are working through second broods. The shorebirds have turned around and are starting to show up in singles. We’re in the autumnal shift that’s going on around us, but our ranges have necessarily become smaller. I like to think that we’re doing the right thing and staying home—that each of us became an island that birds can fly past, and maybe take respite in the space that we have. It’s been a lesson to me in watching, and returning to becoming a bird *watcher* rather than a birder.

BJ: *Thank you again for making the time for this.*

JDL: You know, I was happy to take the call, because Maryland is such a special place. It has this special place in my heart because of the connections. Birds will make connections if you allow them to, if you can step back for a minute and think about not just what the birds *are* but what it is that they *do*, and *who* it is that they are, whether it’s waterfowl in the winter or warblers in the spring. If you imagine those waterfowl coming from far regions of the north or the warblers coming from a world away to the south of you, and that they can converge on *your* place, it becomes, to me, a much more meaningful appreciation than just slamming a check on a list. I think that’s ultimately how we conserve birds, but also how we appreciate one another, person by person. We’re ultimately in the same flock together.

Editor’s note: Look for Johnson’s book review of Dr. J. Drew Lanham’s Book, *The Home Place; Memoirs of a Colored Man’s Love Affair with Nature*, in the next issue of The Maryland Yellowthroat.

<https://www.amazon.com/Home-Place-Memoirs-Colored-Affair/dp/1571313508>

CHAPTER CHATTER

Edited by

Jean
Wheeler



...continued from page 10.

We spend our mornings on the balcony, listening to the dawn chorus, while I count the species and polish my “birding by ear”. It’s easy to collect a dozen or so different species within 10 minutes. On any given day, I can spend an hour wandering the nature trail and get, on average, 25 species. If I take the long route, species totals can exceed 35. Just a stroll down the driveway causes me to stop and become distracted by all the birds.

There are still the Cardinals and Chickadees, Starlings and Mourning Doves, but now I’ve added Yellow-throated Warblers and Red-Eyed Vireos, Eastern Kingbirds and Cedar Waxwings, Great Crested Flycatchers and Wood Thrushes, all species that are new to my “normal”. One morning, a Baltimore Oriole landed atop a nearby tree as we were drinking our morning coffee. A juvenile Barred Owl has his favorite perch about 20 feet from our balcony. As the seasons progress, I’m learning new birds, their songs and habits every day.

Since our move, I’ve done more birding than ever. I’ve submitted 144 checklists to eBird and documented 77 species on the property. Some are exhibiting breeding behavior which is being added to the Bird Breeding Atlas project. Birding here has been a solace during this time of social distancing, because whoever feels lonely when you are out with the birds?

As the rest of the world suddenly discovers birding as a “new hobby”, we veterans can just smile and agree that we’ve always known the joy it brings. Birding keeps us centered and whole. In this time of world uncertainty, my new patch has been a great gift. *Mary Murray*

Atlasing Advice for a Newbie

If you have never been in this woods before: A. Get a trail map. B. Don’t leave the trail.

What supplies should you bring besides your bins and checklist? Water bottle, bug repellent, hat, boots, walking stick, phone, compass(maybe). No camera! (It gets lost.)

You ignored 1B and can’t find the trail again? Don’t believe the thinning of the trees you finally encounter indicate that a rescue road is nearby.

Fighting through thinning trees and rock piles you arrive at an endless fence? Consider what might be on the other side before you shimmy under it.

Seeking a gate you spy adjacent fence posts not connected by wire but with a broad and continuous stretch of mud between them? Do not assume your boots will handle the mud (depth unknown).

The closest fence post offers an anchor to cling to while extracting yourself one foot at a time from the mud, but what is that wrapped around the post? Multiflora rose. (OUCH). And what about those fence wires? Electrical. (Yikes!)

You have made it through the “gate” into a new pasture where cows suddenly arrive to inspect you? Ignore them and they will soon ignore you.

You head across the pasture toward a distant farmhouse. Is that another fence? Yes, but it is a board fence. Climb over it? Not in boots coated toes to tops with inch thick mud. Shimmy under again.

Your first encounter on the other side is a Peacock? No, you can’t list him in the Atlas even if his spouse is sitting on four eggs.

Still no road in sight, only a very long driveway. You encounter the farmer on whose land you are currently trespassing. She graciously offers your mud coated self a ride to your vehicle which is an estimated two miles distant by now? ACCEPT IT! *Jane Scocca*

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

When Jean called for Chatter submissions she lamented that due to Covid-19 few people would have travel stories to share. Right. So I asked for members to tell their Maryland friends how they were coping with the pandemic bird-wise. Here's the result. *Chris Wright*

Katherine Pauer: Discovering Redgate Park

These past few months have been a little out of the ordinary, but one thing that has helped me keep calm has been staying connected to nature. I have accomplished this through birding one of my favorite spots: Redgate Park, which is in Rockville MD. I first heard about Redgate Park through a fellow co-worker, who told me there was a pair of Great-Horned owls nesting in the park, and of course I had to see these owls for myself. She gave me directions and shortly afterwards, a friend and I journeyed to Redgate to see the famed pair of Great-Horned owls with our own eyes. We made our way to the spot and sure enough we spotted the female Great-horned owl sitting in her nest, trying to keep warm from the wind. From that day, I was hooked on Redgate Park. In the following months as the pandemic began to affect our region, I began to bird more and more at the park, witnessing the daily lives of its avian inhabitants. I watched a pair of American Robins defending their nest from a curious Blue Jay. I observed pairs of Eastern Bluebirds fly across the open fields and glimpsed at a couple of Carolina Wrens fly off with nesting material in their tiny beaks. I also experienced some firsts as a birder, I saw my first Rose-breasted Grosbeak, my first Palm Warbler and my all-time favorite spring sighting, a Solitary Sandpiper. All seen at Redgate Park. But I am not the only one who has experienced the joys of birding at Redgate Park. I had the lovely opportunity to chat with fellow birder, *Anne Mytych*, about her bird sightings at Redgate Park. Here are just a few of the birds Anne has seen in the past few months: Baltimore Oriole, an Eastern Meadowlark, and just this past week, a Yellow-breasted Chat! Anne believes that the variety of habitats at Redgate make it such a special place to bird, because we get to see birds that inhabit various ecosystems all in one place.

[*Anne Mytych* is one of a group of MOS members encouraging the City of Rockville to maintain the former Redgate Golf Course as a nature preserve.]

Stella Tea: Birding Taiwan

In early 2019, I wrote about a 2018 homecoming trip to Hong Kong. Although I had fun birding and eating there, I wished my son Nathan was there to share the joy and to help me ID some of those Asian birds! Our chance to visit Hong Kong in 2019 was thwarted by the political unrest that overtook the region. Still wanting to visit Asia, we decided to go to Taiwan although we were unfamiliar with the country. It was one of the best decisions we could have made. In November 2019, we spent a total of 9 days birding (and eating through) Taipei in the north, Tainan in the south, and Dasyueshan (Big Snow Mountain) in Taichung. We did a lot of birding on our own, but our local guide was instrumental in helping us find more than 75% of endemic species (28) at different elevations on Dasyueshan. Equally as exciting, we spotted red and white giant flying squirrel, Reeve's muntjac, and Formosan serow in the night. My 600th bird turned out to be the Lesser Sand-Plover that we got towards the end of the trip. Some of my favorites include the White-breasted Waterhen, Blue Rock-Thrush, Gray Treepie, Taiwan Barbet, Black-winged Kite, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Baikal Teal, Maroon Oriole, Green-backed Tit, Swinhoe's Pheasant, and Collared Bush-Robin. In total, we encountered about 155 bird species. More importantly, I got to spend quality time with my teenage son, and I would always be thankful for that.

Marta Wagner: Fallout on Capitol Hill

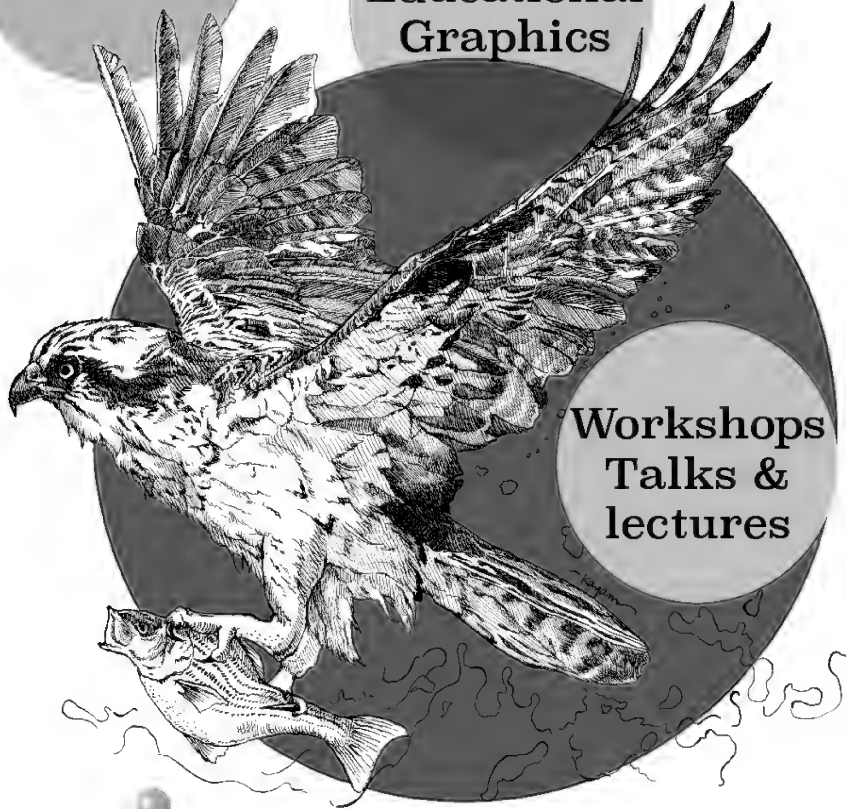
Every May since 2008 (except once when a mean boss made me work), I have gone to northwest Ohio for spring migration -- even before the Biggest Week festival started. But the Ohio hotspots were closed this year, and I experienced migration locally. When I was in Ohio in years past, I always wondered what I was missing here, and this year I found out. I think I learned a lot about the patterns of migration in our area, including the arrival of our breeding birds. The high point for me was a complete surprise, however. On Friday, May 22, I (mistakenly) decided that the forecast didn't look good for migration overnight and that I'd take a break from dawn birding. Around 7am the next day I opened my back door for ventilation, and I realized I was hearing a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in my tiny Capitol Hill backyard. I got my binoculars, and the tree in my neighbor's yard had the most amazing spectacle! It was FULL of migrants. There must have been at least 25 warblers, as well as a Peewee and a Red-eyed Vireo. Most of the warblers were Blackpolls and Bay-breasted, but there were also some Black-throated Greens, Redstarts, Magnolias, and Parulas, as well as at least one stunning Blackburnian. I watched for about 45 minutes until the spectacle tapered off and my need for coffee took precedence.

I'm still planning to go to Ohio next May, but staying home certainly has its rewards!

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MOS Partners with Frederick County Landowner

MOS is working with a private landowner in Frederick County who has been restoring grassland and riparian habitat on his 125-acre farm in the hope of someday being able to hear once again the iconic whistle of the Northern Bobwhite. The land on Linganore Creek has been permanently preserved through the county's Agricultural Preservation Program. The owner wishes to host research projects to study birds and other wildlife that are using the habitat, and is setting up an advisory committee to provide guidance on habitat management. Chris Eberly and the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership will coordinate research and monitoring efforts on behalf of MOS. The protocol for the monitoring studies is still being worked out; Chris will issue a call for volunteers at a later time, probably not until next spring.

The Linganore Creek farm is not open to the public at this time. The owner resides on the property and we need to be mindful of his privacy. We are in discussions with the owner about the possibility of scheduling a limited number of field trips (with limited group size) for MOS chapters. We will keep MOS membership apprised of any positive change in access to the property.

Marcia Watson, Bonnie Borsa, Chris Eberly & John McKitterick

Anne Cianni and Mike Bowen: Birding Peru

We spent a most enjoyable 10 days in Peru with Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours in early February 2020. The principal part of the tour was a “cruise” on the Amazon River and its tributaries near Iquitos, which is more than 200 miles from where the Amazon runs into the Atlantic in NE Brazil but where the river is already a mile wide! We traveled to Iquitos by plane from Lima, as Iquitos is not reachable by road from Peru or any other country. In fact, it is the largest city in the world not to be accessible by land! The week in the upper Amazon produced literally hundreds of bird species, from Parakeets to Trogons to Jacamars – most seen from small skiffs -- 12-passenger boats with twin outboard motors that could speed fast over the waves yet move slowly and silently in the many wooded creeks off the main rivers. Highlights included Trogons, Jacamars and a host of Tanagers, not forgetting a fabulous Capped Heron, which allowed us very close for photos. When birding in Iquitos before getting on our boat, the Zafiro, we came across what are apparently the first breeding Common Gallinules for this part of the world. The Amazon birding was complemented by terrific cuisine and by the talented crew, who not only knew all the local flora and fauna but had considerable musical talents as exhibited at a musical extravaganza on our last night aboard. Before flying to Iquitos, we had had a day to ourselves to bird in the City of Lima. A beautiful park in Lima’s business district gave us Vermilion Flycatcher, Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet, and the interestingly named Croaking Ground-Dove, while the first day of the main trip went south to the fishing village of Pucusana and to the nearby island via small boats. Top birds there were Humboldt Penguins, lots of Cormorants of two species, Peruvian Pelican, Peruvian Boobies, Inca Tern, and 5 different Surf Cinclodes, a Peruvian endemic species.

Mike Bowen: Atlasing at Glenstone Museum in Potomac

Soon after I learned in January, 2020, from the Maryland-DC Breeding Bird Atlas coordinators for Montgomery County that I would be assigned a Block in the Travilah area of the county, I saw that contained within the block was the Glenstone Museum, a large (300-acre) private property. I had never visited the museum, but other birders whom I know had, and had raved about the place’s potential for birds – and its impressive collection of modern art, both on canvas and as outdoor sculptures. So I wrote the museum’s management and asked if I could visit and include the place in the list of properties in my Block, mostly public parkland, that I would visit in the five years of the Atlas.

To my surprise and delight, Glenstone not only gave me permission to visit but invited me to make a presentation to the staff about the Atlas and the prospect for bird finding on the museum’s property. I made the presentation at the end of January to a group of about 100 Glenstone staff members, just before their regular Wednesday midday staff meeting. Using a PowerPoint presentation on the Atlas program generously provided by Atlas Coordinator Gabriel Foley welded to a tutorial of my own devising on how to use eBird to record bird sightings on the museum’s property, I took almost an hour of the staff’s lunch period. The reaction was more positive than I could ever have expected: people came up to me afterwards with tales of birds that they had seen and/or heard in the course of their work at the museum, and some even showed me photos they had taken of Wild Turkeys with young!

Subsequently I have birded at Glenstone at least once a week, and as of June 22 I have recorded 100 species on the museum’s property. Many species have been confirmed as breeding, especially with the help of Glenstone’s gardeners and field staff. Of course, for the last 3 months, there has been almost no public visiting of the museum because of the coronavirus. I have been allowed to visit nevertheless, for which I am extremely grateful to the museum’s staff, especially Paul Tukey, Director of Sustainability for the Glenstone Foundation. I take as many photos of resident species as I can and provide them to the museum.

Glenstone is currently open (grounds only) Thursday - Sunday. Reservations are necessary -- those interested should go to the following URL to get full information and to make reservations in advance: <https://bit.ly/2Zm8aYq>

When you go there, birding colleagues, please record an eBird checklist. Glenstone is an eBird Hotspot: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L8133470>

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Covid-19 and Southern Maryland Birders

Twenty-twenty started off great. *Jane Kostenko* and I did a trip to Ireland and despite it not being a birding trip, we managed to pick up a nice slug of life birds. On the way home, we were hearing rumors of Covid-19 and were glad to be heading home when there could be potential travel issues involved down the road. Little did we know.

On March 31, Governor Hogan imposed stay at home orders. Because the Maryland/DC Breeding Bird Atlas was just starting, we hoped that this would be a brief interruption and by the end of spring migration, restrictions would be lifted and the handful of birders in southern Maryland would be back at it, hitting atlas blocks all over the area particularly the ones that got little attention in the previous atlas.

On April 7, Mike Charest, a birder who works at Patuxent NAS in St. Mary's, was out doing some local birding during the lockdown. At this point, most people weren't venturing from home and birding is about as non-essential as it gets. When he reported Maryland's second record of Burrowing Owl on Long Neck Road in southern St. Mary's, all of the top St. Mary's County listers jumped in their cars and headed south. It was even south of Scott Clark, young birder extraordinaire, who lives in Scotland! Because the owl was being seen on a very rural road, there were only two houses at that end of the dead-end road so the local homeowners were minimally impacted. The second house homeowner came out and told us we could wander around her yard when the owl had flown from a cement culvert into her yard where we couldn't see it. Some out of county birders saw it as well but sadly it was not to be found the next morning.

On May 10, Scott Clark was out doing the Global Big Day in St. Mary's County. While birding at the Elms Environmental Education Center, he found a Least Bittern, a pretty uncommon bird in the county. Then he found two Common Gallinules, a bird not detected in St. Mary's for 13 years. Because safe dates for COGA start on May 20, and access to the Elms Ed Center was restricted due to Covid-19, we decided to not broadcast it. Only one bird was present the next day then they were not relocated henceforth.

Sherman Suter, the Calvert County BBA3 coordinator, was out atlasing on June 11 along Mackall Road. He ran into a landowner who described an odd bird they had seen earlier. He followed them back to the site and lo and behold, Calvert County's first record of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher! Sherman watched the bird for a while then it flew off to the north. He was unable to relocate and despite a concerted effort by other birders, it was not relocated. Big payoff for one atlaser!

So, in the meantime, southern Maryland birders are staying closer to home than usual. Jane and I have been beating the bushes pretty hard in our home block (Hollywood CE). When you walk within your block 5-10 miles a day, you start to get very familiar with all of the birds and where many of them hang out so once safe dates came around, the more difficult birds quickly went from Possible to Probable just because they could be counted on to sing from the same area, sometimes the same tree, and sometimes the same branch. Feeder watching pays big dividends as well and the lower hanging fruit like chickadees, titmice, cardinals, etc. can be confirmed with ease.

Since this is the first year of the five-year atlas project, it will be interesting to see how Covid-19 will have affected the detection of breeders. Will some of the more rural blocks suffer because of a lack of effort or will it end up with similar coverage compared to the previous atlases? Since the data is immediately visible on eBird, we may know sooner rather than later! *Tyler Bell*

WASHINGTON COUNTY

COVID Changes Plans

Birds are a constant in our changing world and a joy to watch on our farm at Sideling Hill. As I've always confessed, I am an amateur bird watcher — so not sure what qualifies as news for Chapter Chatter but always happy to share what we see that delights us and hope it will others. We were slated to host a hike on our farm & trails for the MOS convention in mid May as Cumberland is just west of us. We'll look forward to being involved with 2021 plans and better days ahead.

Valley Meadow Farms has a farmhouse vacation rental. (There's also an option to bring your own horse.) We are thankful to be re-opening and inviting folks to come and enjoy our farmhouse getaway. An escape to the countryside has never been more needed. We place copies of the MOS Yellowthroat in the rental and have had several guests comment how much they enjoy reading it. We also host day hiker school groups. We are seeking functional binoculars and gently used or new bird field guides for these students. Thankfully, we've remained safe and well and hope each of you have, as well. Thank you for including us in Chapter Chatter. We enjoy being MOS members and value all the good & important work its members do. *Karla Graul & family*

...continued from page 17.

we interviewed Mark Raabe who started the trail in the late 1970s, and retired Superintendent of the Battlefield, John Howard. While the trail was not started under John's tenure at the Battlefield, he was a big supporter. As I learned about their work on this project, it became even more important to me to get their story out to the general public.

We had a lot of fun filming the bluebirds although they were not always the most cooperative of subjects! Over the summer Conrad ultimately edited the film to a beautiful 24-minute documentary that exceeded my expectations. It was completed in October and was then submitted to the Maryland International Film Festival. It was accepted for a March world premiere. However, due to COVID-19, that festival was cancelled.

Most recently the Civil War Times Magazine discovered our movie and is planning to include it in a future article. The 24-minute movie is now available for rent or purchase on Vimeo.com or Amazon Prime. It has received multiple 5-star reviews on Amazon.

Although I had many years of theatre experience, filmmaking has been a new journey for me, and it has been a joy to meet everyone involved. It has even spurred me, our director, and other members of our family to put up bluebird boxes. This year I can happily report that there are two more eastern bluebirds in the world.

Follow us on our public Facebook page, [Bluebirds of Antietam](#), for updates on festivals.

Stefanie Boss, Producer, Bluebirds of Antietam



Les Roslund

1937 - 2020

Leslie "Les" Allan Roslund, of Tunis Mills, MD, passed away unexpectedly at home on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. He was 83 years old.

Born in Valley, NE in 1937, Les was the middle son of the late Willard Jennings Roslund and Pearl Dorothy Nelson Roslund. Les lived a very happy childhood on the family farm in Nebraska, graduating as valedictorian and president of the Valley High School class of 1954. Les maintained cherished relationships with his many cousins in Valley, and with his high school classmates, with whom he was creating a virtual reunion for 2020.

Les obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Physics from Doane College in Crete, NE; then moved to Washington, DC, where he was employed for 39 years at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in White Oak, MD. Throughout his life, Les thoroughly enjoyed his relationships with others, and his work world was no exception. Les identified many superb mentors, bosses, and co-workers who brought encouragement, wisdom and joy to his life during his work years.

During his early years in DC, Les was a leader in the Calvary Baptist Church Youth Fellowship Ministry, where he met, courted and married his wife of 56 years, Carolyn Mary (Walker) Roslund. Les and Carolyn raised two children, Bryan David Roslund and Cheryl Elaine (Hamant) Roslund; and shared many passions in life, including Les' love of birdwatching, travel, gardening and genealogy.

After his retirement in 1996, Les and Carolyn moved to Tunis Mills, where Les subsequently served in many leadership positions in the Presbyterian Church of Easton; and was also an active leader of the Talbot County Bird Club. Les was known for his warm and welcoming personality, his generosity in sharing his extensive knowledge with others, and his patient ability to enhance everybody's enjoyment of birds and nature.

Indeed, Les was a friend to everyone, as nobody could resist being drawn in by his good-humored charm, his generous conversations, and his ability to share his knowledge in such a beautiful and poetic manner. As Les optimistically journalled of his own life, he wrote "Fun, fun, fun! Life has been good!"

Les is survived by his wife, Carolyn Walker Roslund; his son and daughter-in-law, Bryan Roslund and Rebecca Browning (Potomac, MD); his daughter and son-in-law, Cheryl Hamant Roslund and Eric Hamant (Clayton, OH); two granddaughters: Emily Lynn Hamant (Missoula, MT) and Alison Rose Hamant (Los Angeles, CA); his dearly loved aunt, Jane Pogue (Easton, MD); his brother and sister-in-law, Gerald Lynn and Joyce Roslund (Rochester, MI); his sister-in-law, Linda Roslund (Villa Park, CA); and many additional cherished cousins, nephews, and nieces. Les is preceded in death by his parents, Willard and Pearl Roslund; and his brother Charles Gaylen Roslund.

Editor's Note: Les Roslund was the long-time author of the Birds of Note column for The Maryland Yellowthroat. He wrote the column for 11 years, focusing on notable bird sightings in the Maryland and DC area. This is a reprint of his final Birds of Note column from the March/April 2017 issue of The Maryland Yellowthroat.

Birds of Note

Autumn in Maryland in 2016 attracted several fascinating species, some of which stayed around long enough to give birders plenty of opportunity to find and enjoy them. The most notable of the group was a BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER that showed up Nov 26 at the Tydings Memorial Park, Havre de Grace, Harford County and stayed until Jan 15, 2017. The discoverers were Rob and Lisa Ann Fanning of Morgantown, NJ. Both are skilled and experienced birders. They quickly recognized the bird and within minutes Lisa posted the finding on MD Birding via Facebook. Josh Emm and Dominique Bayne of Harford County were the first Maryland Birders to reach the scene, and many others soon followed. This sighting was the first for the species in Harford County and is likely to become only the seventh accepted sighting in Maryland. The bird normally winters in Mexico and southward. During the breeding season the species is only rarely found east of New Mexico. Josh Emm faithfully monitored the presence of this bird and reported it almost daily from Nov 22 to Jan 15. There were no additional reported sightings after that date.

To the surprise and joy of regional birders, a second BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER was found in nearby District of Columbia on Dec 30. This bird showed up in a residential section of DC near American University. The finder was Hugh McGuinness. Hugh looked for the bird each day after the discovery, and continued to report it through Jan 07. No additional sightings were reported after that.

Christmas Counts bring out many of the best birders of each count area, along with good numbers of skilled birders from elsewhere. Groups like that often find some great birds. Proving the point this year, the Lower Kent County CBC birding team found a pair of PINK-FOOTED GEESE on Dec 18. Amada Spears, a widely recognized local birder, found the twogeese in a small flock of CANADA GEESE near Reese's Corner Road (west of Rte. 20 between Rock Hall and Fairlee). Amanda drew them to the attention of three other members of her CBC team. After the team left, no additional sightings of the PINKFOOTEDS were reported.

The Point Lookout CBC in St. Mary's County turned up a drake BARROW'S GOLDENEYE among hundreds of COMMONGOLDENEYES and other duck species that were present during this Dec 18 count. The birds were visible from the grounds of the Elms Environmental Education Center, but separating out a particular BARROW'S GOLDENEYE from the numerous COMMONS was no easy task due to the distance and wind conditions that were involved. Fortunately, the CBC team members were Tyler Bell and David Moulton, both being skilled birders with sufficient patience to keep sorting the birds until they found what they sought. What they sought was much like an old friend, for this was the sixth consecutive year in which a BARROW'S drake has been located during the Pt. Lookout CBC. This bird is continuing in the area as of this writing. The most recent sighting report was filed on Jan 26 by Vince deSanctis of Talbot County.

St. Mary's County hosted a visit by another great bird, beginning on Dec 13 when Pat Rose of Callaway caught sight of a BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK in her yard at one of her feeders. The bird was quite skittish, but Pat managed to get a photo suitable for identification purposes. She announced the sighting and forwarded her photo of it to the MD Notable Bird Sightings Facebook group. Pat, an experienced birder, was quite aware that this bird ranked as a mega-rarity species in Maryland. Jim Green of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, briefly viewed the bird on Dec 14, as did Tyler Bell and Jane Kostenko and others. The bird returned to Pat's feeders fairly regularly for the next week, and Pat was a very gracious host. There may have been later visits by this bird, but none were widely reported.

St. Mary's County began hosting a wintering hatch-year female RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD in late November and the bird has continued to use the feeder of the host until at least Jan 22. Interested birders have been directed to the Wildewood Neighborhood Walk, Wildewood, St. Mary's County. Tyler Bell and Jane Kostenko have faithfully provided periodic updates on the status of this bird.

On Dec 03 Jim Stasz observed a RUBYTHROATED HUMMINGBIRD at a private residence in Stevensville, Queen Anne's County. His report included several excellent photos that clearly supported the identification of this very late migrant. One photo even showed the bird drawing nectar from a pineapple sage blossom.

Two NORTHERN SHRIKES chose to use Maryland as a wintering site this year. The first was reported by Dan Small in Queen Anne's County on Dec 4. This was a hatch-year bird, and it was found along Ben's Point Road near Church Hill. It apparently found the wintering conditions suitable, for it was reliably present along or near Ben's Point Road until Jan 22. The young oak trees in that development provided excellent feeding sites and also made it easy for birders to spot the bird. The second NORTHERN SHRIKE in this region was found by Kathy Colston on Jan 1st near Triadelphia Reservoir, Montgomery County. It was not reported again until Jan 7th when Tom Field relocated it. This one was difficult to view since it chose to perch in a brushy area on private property. Persistent birders were rewarded with sightings over the next few days, but few good photos were attained. Reports of sightings continued until Jan 18 when what turned out to be the final report was submitted by Joe Hanfman of Columbia, Howard County.

And finally, most birders looking for SNOWY OWLS in our area this winter have been disappointed. One notable exception occurred on Dec 7, according to a secondhand report from Patricia Wood of Silver Spring. Pat saw a MDBirding Facebook report of a SNOWY OWL that was seen Dec 7th on the Bay Bridge near Hemingway's. She kindly forwarded it to give it wider circulation. No other SNOWY OWL reports have shown up this winter.

Les Roslund.

Paul A. Zucker

1944 - 2020

The Maryland Ornithological Society has lost one of its long-term stalwarts. Paul Zucker, MOS President from 2002 to 2004, passed away on July 4, 2020 at the age of 75. Paul was an excellent birder who made major contributions to MOS during his tenure as a Board member, President, Long Range Planning chair, and, most recently, Budget Committee chair. Not only have we lost a leader in our organization, and I've lost my weekly birding companion, but MOS has lost an esteemed colleague, friend, and mentor to many.

Paul grew up in New York City, but despite being a city dweller he developed a strong interest in birds during family vacations in upstate New York. His love of birds continued throughout his life. After he earned a PhD in physics, followed by two



post-doctoral positions, finding time to bird all the while, he embarked on his long career at The Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. He travelled widely for conferences and technical meetings, often arranging those meetings adjacent to a weekend, which gave him opportunities to explore many areas of the U.S. Using his keen, logical mind, he successfully reasoned with his employer that it was more cost-effective to have him extend his stay at his meeting location over a weekend than to fly home immediately post-meeting at higher air fares. And, indeed, he used his time well, visiting national parks, wildlife refuges, or other special places to enhance his birding skills and add to his life list, which grew significantly, as did his wealth of stories of seeing unusual species or making remarkable sightings.

After retirement he travelled internationally, often for sightseeing but frequently with time added on for birding. His wife Sherry accompanied him on many of his trips, including birding trips, but he also ventured on his own to far-flung birding sites. Paul was a life-long learner. As a retiree he studied extensively: classes in Hebrew, history, art, and music. My birding mornings with him had to be scheduled around his busy class schedule. He also played the double bass in the all-volunteer Montgomery Symphony Orchestra.

Paul's musical training served him well as a birder. When he and I birded together he could pull the faintest call from the cacophony of the morning chorus and identify any bird by sound alone, detecting the slightest rising or falling notes, variations I could barely detect. Thanks to Paul's careful tutelage, I've grown significantly in birding by ear, though I have little hope of reaching his level of expertise. In the last year or so, Paul's mobility and eyesight began to decline, but his hearing and memory were as sharp as ever. Our birding skills complemented one another – my eyesight and quicker response combined with his song recognition and memory of habitat details and key identification marks made us a good team. Recently we began field work for the Breeding Bird Atlas project, visiting each other's blocks, an activity he thoroughly enjoyed. He looked forward to his third atlas project, combing some of the same terrain in which he spent so much time in prior years.

Paul's loss will be immensely felt by MOS. His memory for details about MOS history was superb. During MOS Board meetings he often brought clarity to questions about why we operate the way we do, providing needed perspective, continuity, and guidance to navigate our society's decisions. Paul was a member of both the Howard and Montgomery MOS Chapters for many years and served as a Howard state director before assuming higher offices. After he became MOS President he held the first Planning Meeting to decide several important questions facing MOS, in particular the role and management of our sanctuaries as well as the MOS management structure. He went on to carefully rewrite the Manual of Operations. After that successful endeavor, he led an effort to revamp how we manage the MOS financial portfolio, creating a structure that is still in use and working well. For the last nine years Paul chaired the Budget Committee, again creating a lasting, orderly process we follow each year.

And Paul had a keen eye for identifying up-and-coming leaders in MOS. Many of his suggested candidates have stepped up to the challenge of managing our all-volunteer, vital organization. As a past MOS president I know I speak for others that we benefited from Paul's wisdom. Through his coaching and finesse in guiding us we could feel his concern for us and our success. And throughout we were touched by his intelligence, warmth, and wonderful sense of humor.

Paul Zucker was a remarkable individual who contributed so much to MOS, an organization he loved. And he dearly loved birds and birding. We'll miss Paul as a friend and as a mainstay of our organization.

Tom Strikwerda

